



AirTAP Briefings



A publication of the AirTAP program of the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota

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Tighter security measures impact general aviation

Although the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were not orchestrated using general aviation (GA) aircraft, the federal government has since taken actions that affect GA operators. In addition, the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, at the request of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), established a working group, composed of GA associations, to develop a list of security enhancement guidelines. This *Briefings* article begins with an overview of current federal actions that affect general aviation and wraps up with the working group's recommendations.

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Pilots

- Regulations permit the immediate suspension, revocation, or refusal to issue an airman certificate to anyone that TSA has determined poses a threat to transportation security.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation has begun issuing a new, security-enhanced airman certificate that replaces the paper-based document.
- Pilots are required to carry government-issued photo identification along with their pilot's certificate when operating an aircraft.

Commercial operators/businesses

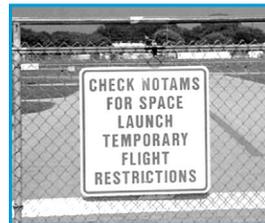
- The Private Charter Standard Security Program states that Federal Aviation Regulation Part 121 and 135 operators who charter aircraft with a maximum certificated takeoff weight greater than 100,300 pounds, or with a passenger-seating configuration of 61 or more, must screen all passengers and accessible baggage prior to their boarding the aircraft. In addition, these operators must have a program establishing the required security components for private charter operations. [To learn more about this program, visit <http://web.nbaa.org/public/ops/security/pcssp>.]
- According to a rule published in the *Federal Register*, "certain aircraft operators using aircraft with a maximum certificated takeoff weight of 12,500 pounds or more [must] carry out security measures." The rule also requires opera-

tors with scheduled or charter service carrying passengers or cargo to conduct criminal history record checks on their flight crew members and restrict access to the flight deck. [To learn more about this program, visit <http://web.nbaa.org/public/ops/security/tfssp>.]

- The FAA has issued a number of recommended actions designed to provide security against the unauthorized use of a flight school or rental aircraft.
- Included in the pending conference report accompanying the FAA reauthorization legislation (H.R. 2115) is a requirement that employees be trained to recognize "suspicious circumstances and activities" of individuals enrolling in or attending flight schools.

Airports/Airspace

- Aircraft operations are limited or restricted in certain areas throughout the United States when intelligence officials report heightened security sensitivity. These airspace restrictions are patrolled and enforced by U.S. Customs and U.S. military aircraft.
- TSA has implemented a hotline (1-866-GA-SECURE), operated 24/7, that allows anyone to report suspicious activity to a central command structure.
- Aircraft operations are limited in the airspace over major sporting events (college football, professional baseball and football, NASCAR, etc.). Banner-towing operations are prohibited. Other restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis when deemed appropriate by federal authorities (e.g., the 2002 Winter Olympics).
- A pre-existing NOTAM advising pilots not to circle or loiter over nuclear facilities has been strengthened to advise pilots to avoid these facilities altogether.



WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The working group's objective was to provide greater consistency for local GA security requirements involving airport owners,

tenants, and aircraft operators. The group faced two challenges: finding a balance between proposing too much versus not enough, and determining what threat general aviation posed to national security.

Following are the specific recommendations made by the security working group to help the local GA community develop a flexible security plan given its available resources. An important concept in developing and implementing these guidelines is avoiding any unfounded mandates to airports, states, GA businesses, and pilots. Since some small airports do not have the funds to implement every security guideline suggested, the following recommendations may help them establish appropriate guidelines for their specific situation.

Personnel

- Pilots: Prior to boarding an aircraft, verify the identity of all occupants, that they are aboard at the invitation of the owner/operator, and that all baggage and cargo is known to the occupants. Also, be able to provide government-issued photo identification along with your pilot's certificate.
 - Control aircraft ignition keys so that a student cannot start aircraft until an instructor is ready for the flight to begin; consider having any student pilot check in with a specific employee (e.g., a dispatcher, aircraft scheduler, flight instructor, or other "management" official) before being allowed access to parked aircraft; have a student sign or initial a form and withhold keys until an instructor or other management official also signs or initials; or, when available, use a different ignition key from the door lock key.
- Verify the identity of an individual renting an aircraft by checking a government-issued photo ID as well as the airman certificate and current medical certificate (if needed for that specific operation).
- Establish sign-in/sign-out procedures for all transient operators identifying their parked aircraft.

Aircraft

- Ensure that pilots make it as difficult as possible for an unauthorized person to gain access to aircraft. This would



include using existing mechanisms such as door locks and keyed ignitions, hanging aircraft, or using an auxiliary lock (commercially available options include locks for propellers, throttle, prop controls, and tie-downs). Lock hangar doors and aircraft doors to prevent unauthorized access to or tampering with the aircraft.

Airports/Facilities

- Consider reasonable vehicle access control such as signage, fencing, gates to facilities, and ramps. Or, use positive control techniques such as restricting access to airside operations to as few locations as possible, balancing the need for authorized access with access control. Periodically review access authorization—including codes, cards, and locks—to vehicular and pedestrian gates leading to airside operations.
- Install effective outdoor area lighting to help improve the security of aircraft parking and hangar areas, fuel storage areas, airport access points, and other appropriate areas. Consider using proximity and motion sensors.
- Secure hangars/personnel doors when unattended.
- Post appropriate signage. Wording may include, but is not limited to, warnings against trespassing, unauthorized use of aircraft, and tampering with aircraft, as well as encouraging the reporting of suspicious activity. Signage should include phone numbers of the appropriate responding law enforcement agency, 911, or TSA's 1-866-GA-SECURE.

Surveillance

- Utilize the Airport Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Airport Watch Program, or develop a similar watch program to include the following actions, if appropriate:
 - Coordinate with local airport officials, pilots, businesses, and/or other airport users.
 - Hold periodic meetings with the airport community.
 - Develop and circulate reporting procedures to all who frequent the airport.
 - Encourage proactive participation in aircraft and facility security and



- heightened awareness measures.
- Post signs promoting the program and warning of airport surveillance.
- Encourage employers to inform staff of airport watch programs.

In addition, consider using local law enforcement for airport security community education, and provide training in recognizing suspicious activity and appropriate response tactics. Suggested training topics include:

- Transient aircraft with unusual or unauthorized modifications.
- Persons loitering in the vicinity of parked aircraft, public waiting areas, or other inappropriate areas.
- Pilots who appear to be under the control of another person.
- Persons wishing to rent aircraft without presenting proper credentials or identification.
- Persons who present apparently valid credentials but who do not display a corresponding level of aviation knowledge.
- Any pilot who makes threats or statements inconsistent with normal aircraft procedures.
- Events or circumstances that do not fit the pattern of lawful, normal activity at an airport.

Law enforcement officer support

- Develop procedures to have security patrols of the ramp, aircraft hangar, and parking areas. Special considerations should be made during periods of heightened security. Airport operators should also communicate and educate local law enforcement agencies on security procedures at the airport.

Security plans and communications

- For a security plan, create an emergency locator map. Identify gates, hydrants, emergency shelters, buildings, and hazardous materials sites on a grid map. Provide fire and law enforcement officials, city managers, and city engineers with a copy of the map. Establish a procedure for handling bomb threats and suspect aircraft.
- For a threat communication system, develop a tiered, comprehensive local phone and contact list and distribute on a need-to-know basis. Include the following 24-hour phone numbers on the contact list:

- airport director
- point of contact or airport security coordinator
- local police or county sheriff
- county/city emergency manager
- state police
- fire department
- state office of public security
- FBI, FAA, or TSA
- other appropriate organizations

- Where possible, establish secure communication capabilities with local law enforcement either through a radio or telephone. Conduct regular meetings with airport tenants and the flying public to discuss security issues and challenges, and have a qualified, single point of contact (POC) for disseminating security information.

Specialty operations

- Take appropriate steps to secure agricultural aircraft when unattended. Examples of existing mechanisms include throttle and control locks, propeller locks, and hidden ignition switches. When not in use, store aircraft in hangars with steel doors locked with electronic security systems. If hangars are not available, park heavy equipment in front of and behind agricultural aircraft.

In closing, each GA airport must decide what type of security measures would work best on its airfield. TSA has not finalized the proposed recommendations, but these suggestions are a good start for a safer, more secure airport. ✈

Resources:

- * *AAAE Airport Magazine*, November/December 2003
- * Report of the Aviation Security Advisory Committee Working Group on General Aviation Airports Security
- * National Business Aviation Association Inc. at <http://web.nbaa.org>

Photos in this article courtesy of AOPA.

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